

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 were examined. Claims 1, and 8-12 were rejected for indefiniteness, and claims 1, 8, 9, and 12 were rejected as being anticipated by EP 0 260 771. Applicants note with appreciation that claims 10 and 11 were found to present new subject matter.

Applicants have amended claims 1-16 to address the indefiniteness rejections, and to better distinguish the present invention from what is disclosed in EP 0 260 771.

Applicants have also added new dependent claims 17-20.

Claims 1-20 are pending.

EP 0 260 771 IS OVERCOME AS A 35 USC § 102 REFERENCE

Without limitation applicants note that the various structures disclosed in EP 0 260 771 do not include at least two elongate members that meet or are joined at a common point.

Independent amended claim 1 now explicitly included such language, support for which is found in the figures filed with the present application. Applicants submit that no new matter is presented by virtue of the within amendment. Since all pending claims now include subject matter not found in the reference of record, EP 0 260 771 is overcome as a 35 USC § 102 reference. If no more relevant reference is known, then pending claims 1-20 should be passed to allowance at this time.

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The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required, including extension fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2319 (Our Order No. 461124-00058 [A-70910/DJB/MAK]).

Respectfully submitted,

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